

Pers: McCarthy, Eugene (Sen)
Pers: Johnson, Lyndon B.

Johnson Lauds McCarthy

Record Number of Leaders Attend Party Dinner

By MARIE SHELTON
 Star Staff Writer

President Lyndon Johnson had a chance last night to take a look at three of the men mentioned as his possible vice-presidential running mates in November.

All three—U. N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson and Minnesota Senators Hubert Humphrey and Eugene McCarthy—spoke at a \$100-a-plate fund-raising dinner at the Madison Hotel honoring Senator and Mrs. McCarthy. The President and Mrs. Johnson dropped in with little advance notice.

The President did not stay long enough to hear the three match oratorical skills. But oratory clearly was on his mind.

Crediting Senator McCarthy with having delivered "the best speech I ever heard made at a political convention" (obviously Senator McCarthy's 1960 nomination of Adlai Stevenson for President) and Senator Humphrey with "always making a good speech," the President said "it took a lot of friendship" for Senator McCarthy to draw him to the dinner where he realized he was likely to precede or follow one of the two Senators.

"A man must have a lot more courage than brains to do that," Mr. Johnson added self-deprecatingly.

A Life Ambition

"All my life I've wanted to be a speaker like Hubert and Gene," he continued. Actually, he said, "I came tonight in the hope that just by associating with you fellows, a little of this would rub off on me."

Also, he said, "I wanted Gene, Abigail (Mrs. McCarthy) and Hubert to know that we are not scared of 'em, because we really love 'em."

It was the first political dinner Mr. Stevenson has attended since he became Ambassador to the U. N. three years ago. He decided to attend just a few days ago, and the decision was not made public. The President greeted his U. N. envoy cordially ("Hello, Adlai. Delighted to see you") when he shook hands with head table guests after his brief speech.

"Lady Bird and I came tonight 'also' to express affection for two of the dearest friends we have, Abigail and Gene McCarthy,"

and "to show you good people who come to dinners like this that we understand the Golden Rule and what makes the mare go. We really appreciate it," the President told the overflow crowd of 550.

At another point the President described Senator McCarthy as "one of the greatest men in public life."

He had "thought for a long time" before deciding to come to the dinner realizing that "if I go to one campaign dinner I'll have to go to all of them," the President confided.

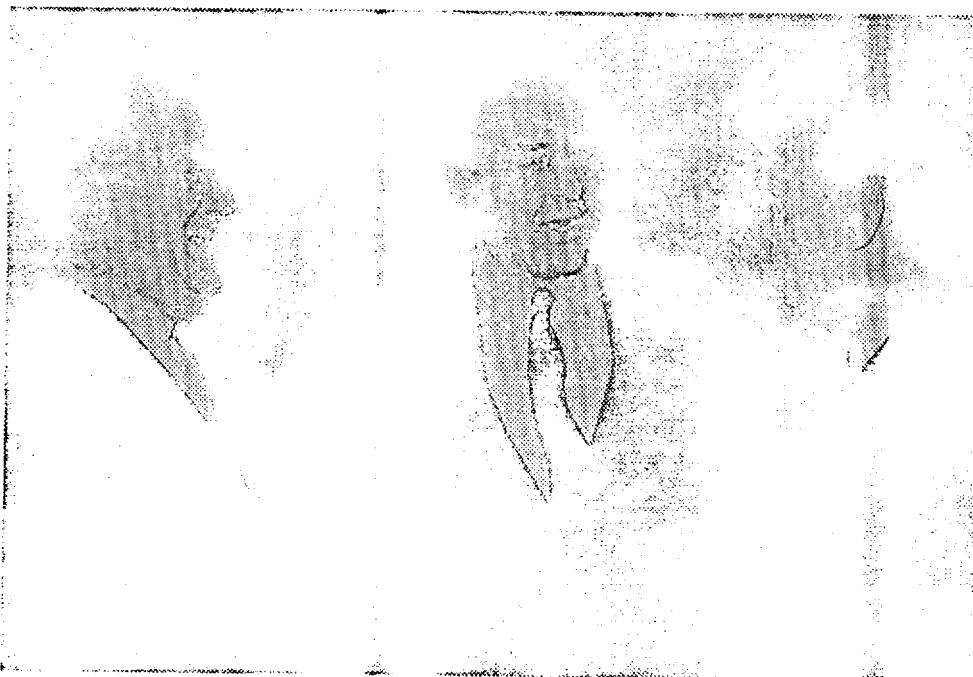
"And then I wondered what better thing I could do this year," he said with a grin.

Kudos for Minnesota

Praising the State of Minnesota for sending "two great Senators" to Washington, Mr. Johnson said he "took a ticket on" both men during his days as Senate leader, by getting them appointments to cherished major committees—Senator Humphrey to Foreign Relations and Senator McCarthy to Finance. "I never have been ashamed of the decision I made for the steering committee of 15," the President added blandly.

The statement, recalling to

Continued



Senator Hubert Humphrey (left), chairman of the testimonial dinner for Senator Eugene McCarthy (center), chats with U. N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson before the dinner at the Madison Hotel last night. President and Mrs. Johnson attended.—Star Staff Photo.

that critics used to complain that Majority Leader Johnson made decisions without consulting the Senate Democratic Steering Committee, drew ripples of laughter.

The high quality of Minnesota's senatorial delegation reminded him, the President said, of how the late Speaker Sam Rayburn of Texas had once responded to a question as to why the Texas congressional delegation was so influential.

"A very simple reason," said Mr. Sam, according to the President. "We pick 'em young. We pick 'em honest. We send 'em there. We keep 'em there."

"I don't know anything better to say to the people of Minnesota than, 'You've got three-fourths of the grade made. Just keep 'em there,'" the President concluded.

The President Arrives

President and Mrs. Johnson arrived at the dinner just as the program was about to start, accompanied by Texas Representative and Mrs. Jack Brooks, close friends, and Jack Valenti, a presidential assistant. The group made the round of the room, shaking many hands. The first that most dinner guests knew of the President's visit was when the band struck up "Hail to the Chief."

Several members of the Finance Committee were on hand to honor their committee colleague, Senator McCarthy, notably including the committee's venerable chairman, Senator Byrd of Virginia.

Presence of Senator Byrd and of Secretary of the Treasury Dillon (who almost never attends political gatherings, and furthermore is a Republican) were just two aspects of a quite remarkable turnout, which drew seven Cabinet members, close to 20 Senators, many House members, one Supreme Court Justice (Tom Clark) and several White House staff members, among others.

The Dillons and Senator Byrd were at the head table with the evening's speaker, as were also House Whip and Mrs. Hale Boggs.

Veteran observers of political dinners said they could not recall a comparable turnout for a Senator in the past. Only Secretary of State Rusk and Secretary of Defense McNamara (who by long tradition avoid partisan gatherings) and Attorney General Robert Kennedy were missing from the Cabinet.

"I am going to recommend that from here on out there be no more dinners in Washington because none can equal this," summed up Senator Humphrey, the dinner chairman.

Ambassador Stevenson praised Senator McCarthy for the "magnitude of his intelligence, the breadth of

his interest, the bigness of his heart and spirit."

"And then when I think of Abigail, as well, that doubles the charm," he added.

"There is no more eloquent representative of what is good in American life than Senator McCarthy," Mr. Stevenson declared. "We all are grateful to him for rehabilitating the phrase 'Senator McCarthy.'"

Senator Humphrey, jesting about the presence of three

vice presidential possibilities at the dinner, suggested that the three form a "troika."

Noting that Republican Senator Kenneth Keating has suggested a constitutional amendment providing for two Vice Presidents—"which I first regarded as narrow-minded and obviously anti-Humphrey"—the Senator said he now has changed his mind.

Senator McCarthy had cheered him, he said, by

telling him: "Hubert, don't be so downcast. When that constitutional amendment comes up taking care of Adlai and me we're going to amend it to provide for three Vice Presidents. We think there should be somebody who just travels around and has a good time."

"I want you to know, Gene, I accept," Senator Humphrey said.

Said Ambassador Stevenson, responding in kind: "I've always been in favor of the troika, as you all know—if I can choose the other two Vice Presidents."

McCarthy Replies

Senator McCarthy, in a short, graceful speech which upheld his reputation as a language stylist, noted dryly that a good many of the \$100 ticket holders at the dinner were "people who take more seriously than others the right of petition"—a delicate way of describing lobbyists vitally interested in provisions of the pending tax bill.

Some of those guests, he said, "are looking for people they might petition. They have a revolutionary background. They are careful to see that no one who is taxed is unrepresented."

Sometimes, he commented, "taxation with representation is somewhat worse than taxation without representation."

Reflecting earnestly for a while on the enormity of the decisions that confront any President of the United States, Senator McCarthy urged that "all of us have an obligation to make decisions as easy as possible for this and any President."

The dinner concluded with a short silence in memory of the late John F. Kennedy.